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THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

Ḑlōir do Dhia aḡ rna hárouib, aḡur ríodcán aḡ an dealam deaḡtoil do na dáoirib.

LXXXII. 14

PUBLISHED THE MIDDLE OF EVERY MONTH, AT 9, UPPER SACKVILLE-STREET, DUBLIN.

Vol. V.—No. 60.

DECEMBER 18, 1856.

{ Annual Subscription, 3s. 6d.; Unstamped
Copies, 3d. each. Payable in Advance.

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THE TRIUMPHS OF ROME.

On the 20th of November, in the year 303, the multitudes that thronged the streets of Rome feasted their eyes upon the pomp and splendour of a spectacle which, for many centuries, their warlike forefathers were wont to value above all other amusements—the spectacle of a Roman triumph. The imperial throne was then occupied by the two emperors, Diocletian and Maximian. The former, as some of our readers may be aware, was a most bitter enemy of the Christian Church; and the “persecution of Diocletian” has ever since been one of the most mournful and memorable eras in the pages of the ecclesiastical historian. The emperor, however, in his military capacity, was a brave and gallant soldier. For several years he had been engaged in the task of repelling the assaults of barbaric nations on the distant provinces of the empire; and at length, on the restoration of peace, he visited Rome, probably for the first time, and displayed before the eyes of his subjects the trophies of his warlike achievements.

It was a magnificent and imposing spectacle. The representations of rivers, mountains, and provinces were carried before the imperial car. The triumphal procession was swelled by crowds of captives, brought from the most distant regions of Europe, and exposed to the gaze of the haughty Romans. Africa, Persia, and Britain, the Rhine, the Danube, and the Nile, all furnished their respective trophies. The vanity of the people was gratified by these visible proofs of the power and glory of their emperors; they did not reflect, perhaps, on the amount of misery occasioned by these wars, or the bloodshed by which these victories had been purchased. It was sufficient for them that the Roman Empire had been extended, no matter by what means, to the farthest corners of the earth, and that the emperors were the undisputed lords of the finest regions of Europe and Asia.

The traveller who now passes along the streets of modern Rome still beholds many striking memorials of its ancient glory, and can form some idea of the character of the triumphal scenes which we have just described. If he takes his stand at the foot of the column of Trajan or Marcus Aurelius, or if he passes by the three triumphal arches which yet remain, the whole scene is vividly brought before him. He can easily picture the magnificence of the procession—the captive princes and generals, the spoils and trophies which preceded the car of the conqueror as he rode along the Via Sacra, followed by his victorious legions, through the Forum to the Capitol. He can yet see the marble pictures of the events of the war—the arms of the soldiers, the scaling of the fortresses, the long rows of prisoners, with their hands tied behind their backs.

“Along the Sacred Way
Hither the triumph came, and winding round
With acclamation, and the martial clang
Of instruments, and cars laden with spoil,
Stopt at the sacred stair that then appeared,
Then through the darkness broke, ample, star-bright,
As though it led to Heaven.”^a

Yet, if any of the countless multitudes who witnessed the triumphal procession of Diocletian, could have been

^a Rogers' Italy.

endowed with the gift of foresight, and permitted to look into futurity, how quickly would their joy have been turned to mourning? It was the last triumph that Rome ever beheld. Soon after this period the emperors ceased to conquer, and Rome ceased to be the capital of the world. The heathen gods, on whose images, as they were borne along, both princes and people were wont to gaze with veneration, were displaced from their shrines; and Christianity, which Diocletian had persecuted with the most unrelenting cruelty, and had striven, but in vain, to extirpate from his dominions, became, before many years, the established religion both of the Eastern and Western world.^b

We have adverted to the existing memorials of the temporal glories of the heathen mistress of the ancient world, and by them we are naturally induced to pass to a consideration of the conquests of Christian Rome. The late Pope Gregory XVI. wrote a book with the title—*Il Trionfo della Chiesa*—The Triumph of the Church—meaning thereby, doubtless, the Church of Rome, the only Church which, in his view, was entitled to that name. Now, what are the materials of which such a triumph ought naturally to consist? An enthusiastic Romanist, perhaps, would say that the picture could be very easily drawn. He would speak of it as the fulfilment and realization of all the glowing predictions of Scripture, descriptive of the peace and happiness which were to flow from the diffusion of the Gospel—foreign nations brought under the gentle yoke of Christianity—the banner of the cross unfurled in lands beyond the limits of the ancient world—heresies put to flight, peace and truth proclaimed, and the pure faith everywhere victorious;—such, it might be imagined, are the proper accompaniments of the triumph of the Church of Rome.

But, alas! the pages of ecclesiastical history forbid us to indulge in such pleasing imaginations as these. Our representation of a triumph of the Church of Rome would be of a very different kind. It is impossible to think, without deep sorrow, of the infliction of human suffering with which the glory of *Heathen Rome* was purchased. No one can look on the arches and columns to which we have above referred, without a bitter pang for the anguish endured by the long train of unfortunate prisoners who served but to adorn the triumph of the conqueror. But it is with feelings of far greater grief and shame that we reflect on what the human race has endured from the power of *Papal Rome*, and on the sacrifices which her triumphs have cost the world. The temporal conquests of the Roman emperors affected the body mainly; the chains with which the limbs of Caractacus were loaded could not crush the indomitable spirit of the British prince. But the conquests of pontifical Rome concern the *soul*. In her triumphal procession, man's reason is led captive, his conscience is in chains, his will groans beneath the yoke, his immortal spirit is bound down to the dust.

Nor is this all. The Church of Rome claims to carry her power yet further. On one of the triumphal arches which yet survive—the arch of Titus—there is a representation of the spoils of the Jewish temple, which were carried in triumph by the conqueror after the taking of Jerusalem: the table of shew-bread and the seven branched golden candlestick are there represented in sculpture; and, doubtless, the volume of the inspired Scriptures of the Old Testament, which was laid up in the Holy of Holies, was not omitted among the spoils. And so, too, the Church of Rome claims a power over the ordinances and sacraments which the Almighty has bequeathed to the Christian Church. The Scriptures of both Old and New Testaments are borne in triumph by Papal Rome. For many centuries she laid her grasp upon the Bible, and kept it secluded from the nations for whose comfort and instruction the Almighty had designed it; and even to this day, in all those countries where her power is equal to her inclination, “the Word of God is bound,” and prophets and apostles are forced to pass under her yoke. Her prisoners are the venerable Fathers of the Eastern and Western Churches. In the presence of her so-called infallible tribunal, the Chrysostoms and Basil, the Cyprians and Augustines, must stand with their

hands tied, to await her pleasure and do homage to her will!^c

The subject suggested by these remarks is too extensive to be fully discussed; and, for the present, we will confine our observations to a single historical illustration of the truth of the assertion we have made, respecting the misery which the Church of Rome has been the means of inflicting upon the Christian world. We will select one memorable example of the way in which her boasted unity has been brought about, and the price at which it has been purchased; and we shall then leave our readers to judge, whether the severe censure of the historian is not fully as applicable to *Papal* as it was to *Imperial Rome*. “They make a solitude and call it peace.”^d

The south of France had attained to a greater height of refinement and civilisation than almost any other part of Europe towards the close of the twelfth century. This beautiful region, comprised within the provinces of Languedoc and Provence, then formed an independent principality, under Raymond Count of Toulouse. It was the land of that melodious tongue which was first attuned to modern poetry. The cities had risen in opulence and splendour. The Count of Toulouse and his vassals had been among the most distinguished of the Crusaders, and their intercourse with the East had softened the barbarism and asperity of manners which were characteristic of the northern nations of Europe. Literature, or at least poetry, had begun to be diffused among the nobles and the people, and had produced its natural results. Almost the only exception to this general progress of refinement was in a quarter where such a failure might have been least expected, namely, among the religious teachers of the Church of Rome.

In no European country had the clergy so entirely, or, it should seem, so deservedly, forfeited its authority. In none had the Church more absolutely ceased to perform its proper functions. The sacerdotal profession, which was the object of ambition if not of reverence, of hatred if not of love, in other parts of Christendom, had here fallen into contempt. Instead of the old proverb for the lowest abasement, “I had rather my son were a Jew,” the Provençals said, “I had rather he were a priest.” The most welcome song of the troubadours was that which contained a bitter satire on the vices of the clergy, or an invective against pilgrimages, against the venality of the Church of Rome, against the haughty bishop, or even the Papal legate himself. Men, in a religious age, will have religion; and it can hardly be supposed that the Provençal mind could have generally outgrown the ancient ritualistic faith, if that faith had been administered with dignity, with gentleness, or with decency.^e

It was impossible, indeed, that the glaring contrast between the simple religion of the Gospel, and the vast system of hierarchical Christianity which had been growing up since the time of Constantine should not, even in the darkest and most ignorant age, awaken the astonishment of some, and arouse a spirit of inquiry in others. But the Provençals, as we have seen, were beginning to feel the growing influence of modern civilisation; and a widespread revolt against Papal Christianity was the natural result. It was an insurrection, not so much against the doctrines then held by the Church of Rome, as against the sacerdotal system itself. Once broken loose from the authority of the clergy, once convinced that the priests did not possess the exclusive power over their salvation,—awe and reverence for the churches, the images, the confessional, once thrown aside—they would be the willing hearers of any teacher who presented them with a system more accordant with reason, and which would allay their thirst for religious truth.

Such teachers speedily arose, both in Provence and Piedmont. Their fundamental tenet was, an appeal to the Scriptures, and the Scriptures alone, from the puerilities of Romish traditional religion. Under the various names of Valdenses, Leonistæ, or poor men of Lyons, they speedily covered almost the whole of the

^c We have adopted the train of thoughts, and, in some paragraphs, the expressions, of a very eloquent passage in one of Dr. Wordsworth's letters to M. Gondon. Vide p. 262; London, 1847.

^d “Ubi solitudo facit, pacem appellant.” They are the words which Tacitus puts into the mouth of the British Chieftain, Calgacus, when attacked by the Roman army. Vide Tacitus, Agricola, c. 30.

^e Our readers will find an interesting account of the triumph of Diocletian in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. xiii.

^f The reader who desires fuller information is referred to Dean Milman's *Latin Christianity*, vol. iv., chap. 8, where the original authorities are cited.

south of France. "This heresy, which the Lord curse" (says the devout Troubadour Fauchet), "had in its power the whole Albigeois, Carcassonne, and Lauragais, from Beziers to Bordeaux."

The evidence of Reinerius, the Dominican Inquisitor, is still more remarkable. "Among all the sects which either now are, or have been," saith he, "there is none more dangerous to the Church than that of the men of Lyons; and this for three reasons: First, because it is more lasting; for, some say that it has existed from the time of Sylvester; some, from the time of the apostles. Secondly, because it is more widely diffused; for there is scarcely any country in which this sect does not exist. Thirdly, because, while all other sects excite horror by their fearful blasphemies against God, the sect of the men of Lyons has a great appearance of piety. They live justly in the sight of men, and have a right faith concerning God, and believe all the articles of the creed; they only speak ill of the clergy and Church of Rome, on which point the multitude of the laity are very ready to believe them."¹

We request the special attention of our readers to the passage which we have just quoted. Reinerius had the best opportunities for acquiring information. He acted as Papal inquisitor against these reformers in the early part of the thirteenth century, and we have just seen how he describes them. He testifies to their antiquity, their numbers, and the purity of their faith. In another place, he testifies to their knowledge of Scripture. He says, that he had seen peasants among them who could recite the book of Job by heart, and several others who could perfectly repeat the whole New Testament.²

Peter Pilichdorf, another writer, who wrote against the Valdenses in the year 1395, gives us some additional insight into their religious system. He says, "they contend that God alone ought to be praised, and honoured, and invoked, and served; that, since He alone redeemed us, He alone can help us; and that the merits of the saints cannot be applied to us, because they belong only to themselves. After this life there are no more than two ways to the departed, and no such place or condition as Purgatory."

Many Roman Catholics, we have no doubt, believe sincerely that the Christian world enjoyed absolute unity, and was in dutiful subjection to the Pope, until the time of the Reformation, in the sixteenth century; and they are sometimes disposed to ask, where was the religion of Protestants before Luther? Such facts as these which we have quoted above, from Roman Catholic writers, will serve to convince them that, even in the darkest ages, pure Scriptural Christianity had its followers, of whom their very enemies were forced to confess that they lived blameless lives, and believed all the articles of the creed; and that their only fault was, that they had separated from the Church of Rome.

The name Albigenes, by which the reformers in the south of France were afterwards known, was derived from Albi, a town in the dominion of the Court of Toulouse, where the Valdenses chiefly flourished. This name was applied to the inhabitants of Toulouse, Carcassonne, Beziers, Narbonne, Avignon, and many other cities where the opinions of the reformers had taken deep root, and where they spread with vast rapidity. For a while, the pleasant land basked in its sunshine; but at length the thunder-cloud appeared in the horizon.

The first Papal edict for the suppression of the Albigenes was issued by Alexander III. That pope, in a council held at Tours, in 1163, published a decree to this effect: "Whereas a damnable heresy has for some time lifted its head in the parts about Toulouse, and has already spread its infection through Gascony and other provinces, concealing itself like a serpent within its own folds: so soon as its followers shall have been discovered, let no man afford them a refuge on his estates, neither let there be any communication with them in buying or selling."³

We may observe in passing, that the system of exclusive dealing, from which the poor converts in Ireland occasionally suffer, is by no means of modern invention. It was put in force nine hundred years ago against the Albigenes; in this, as in so many other matters, the policy of the Church of Rome is unchangeable.

At length, in 1198, Innocent III. ascended the Papal chair. That vigorous, but unscrupulous pontiff quickly grasped the torch of persecution which had been handed to him by one of his predecessors. A few months after his accession, he issued a mandate, addressed to all the great prelates in the south of France, including the archbishops of Aix, Narbonne, and Lyons. This Papal manifesto broadly asserted the civil as well as religious outlawry of

all heretics; the right to banish them; to confiscate their property, to coerce, or to put them to death.⁴ The temporal sovereigns were, at the summons of the two legates, Rainer and Guy, to carry these penalties submissively into effect, and they were offered the strong worldly temptation of all the confiscated estates. "After they have been excommunicated by our before-mentioned brother, Rainer" (says this Innocent pope), "let the princes confiscate their goods, and drive them from their territories."⁵ The Pope further makes a very significant allusion to the stoning of Achan, the son of Carmi, in the book of Joshua, as the proper punishment for these obstinate heretics. Thus we see a very pretty array of weapons brought out from the Papal armoury, and directed against the unoffending Albigenes. First, exclusive dealing; next, deprivation of all their property; next, banishment, or death by stoning. Roman Catholics in Ireland retain to this day a vivid recollection of the penal laws of the last century. In their feelings we fully coincide, and we rejoice that these laws have been repealed by Parliament. But, bad and indefensible as they were, they were mildness itself compared with the enactments of the infallible Pope Innocent III., eight hundred years ago.

But the whole is not yet told. The Pope, finding that his first steps were ineffectual, adopted sterner and more active measures. He sent two fresh emissaries, Peter of Castelnau, and Raoul, of the order of St. Bernard, armed with extraordinary powers. With them was associated Arnold D'Amauri, the abbot of Cîteaux, whom the historian describes as "a man whose heart was sheathed with the triple iron of pride, cruelty, and bigotry."⁶ These spiritual missionaries were generally known by the title of *Inquisitors*—a name not, indeed, honourable or innocent even in its origin, but not yet associated with the thoughts of horror, cruelty, and infamy with which it has since become indissolubly connected. After the lapse of some years, the Pope, finding that the Inquisitors made but slow progress, appealed to Philip Augustus, who was then king of France. He easily persuaded that ambitious monarch, who was jealous of his powerful vassal, Raymond, Count of Toulouse, to march into the heretical provinces, and extirpate the spiritual rebels by fire and sword.

One step more yet remained to be taken by Innocent—one which, even at this distance of time, we can scarcely read of without feelings of the utmost horror and aversion. It appears that one of the before-mentioned Papal legates, Peter of Castelnau, was assassinated by the populace in the states of Raymond. The act was imputed to the connivance, if not the direct instigation, of that prince. The Pope immediately issued a bull of excommunication against him; and, not content with this, he proclaimed a *Crusade*, or Holy War, against the unfortunate Albigenes. "Up," he writes to Philip Augustus of France—"up, soldiers of Christ! up, most Christian King! Hear the cry of blood; aid us in wreaking vengeance on these malefactors." With strange perverted quotations from the sacred Scriptures, he makes Moses and St. Peter, the Fathers, as he calls them, of the Old and New Testaments, predict this amicable union of the royal and sacerdotal powers, and thus to authorise the united Crusade of the kingdom of France and the Church of Rome against the inhabitants of Languedoc!⁷

Never, in the history of man, were the great eternal principles of justice and common humanity so trampled under foot as in the Albigenian war. Never was war waged in which ambition, rapacity, implacable hatred, and pitiless cruelty played a greater part. And, moreover, throughout the war, it cannot be disguised that it was not merely the army of the Church, but the *Church of Rome itself in arms*. Papal legates and the greatest prelates headed the hosts, and mingled in all the horrors of the battle and the siege. Hardly one of the great prelates of France stood aloof. The Archbishop of Rheims was at the head of the northern army. The western host was led by the Archbishop of Bourdeaux. A third force remained under the Bishop of Pay. The Chief Engineer was the Archdeacon of Paris.⁸

The numbers of these united armies were never known. The Troubadour declares that God never made the clerk who could have written the muster-roll in two months, or even in three. He reckons twenty thousand knights, and two hundred thousand common soldiers. The army appeared before Beziers, one of the two chief cities belonging to the Count of Toulouse. The Bishop Reginald, of Montpellier, demanded the surrender of all whom he might designate as heretics. On their refusal of these terms, the city was stormed. A general massacre followed. Neither age nor sex were spared; even priests fell in the remorseless carnage. Then was uttered by Arnold, Abbot of Cîteaux, the frightful com-

mand, which subsequently became almost a proverb: "*May them all! God will know this own!*"⁹

The account of the slain is variously estimated from twenty thousand even up to fifty thousand. Arnold, in his letter to his master Pope Innocent III., announcing the victory, describes the particulars with ferocious glee. "Our men," he writes, "did not spare either rank, age, or sex. Almost twenty thousand men fell by the edge of the sword; and, after an enormous slaughter of the enemy had been made, the city was plundered and burnt to the ground: a wonderful proof of the Divine vengeance."¹⁰

We cannot bring ourselves to describe at length the horrors of this sanguinary war, undertaken against men who, as their very enemies confessed, were blameless in their lives, and whose only crime was, that they refused to acknowledge the usurped authority of a blood-thirsty priest, blasphemously calling himself the Vicar of the Prince of Peace. Carcassonne shared the fate of Beziers. The whole garrison of Montlaur was hanged. A hundred of the garrison of Bran had their eyes put out. One eye was left to the Captain, in order to conduct his soldiers to Caberet.¹¹

The Lord of Minerve, a castle of great strength, pressed by famine, proposed to surrender. Simon de Montfort, who acquired an unenviable reputation for cruelty, as one of the chief leaders of the Crusade, proposed to spare the lives of the garrison; but Arnold insisted that they should first submit to the authority of the Church. But the Abbot of Vaux Cerney preached in vain to the heretics; the women were more obstinate than the men. A hundred and forty of the leaders spared their persecutors the trouble of casting them on the vast pile—they rushed headlong of their own accord into the flames.

The castle of Termes was of still greater strength; the siege lasted four months. The great engineer, the archdeacon of Paris, persevered with the attack, which at last was successful. The governor was taken and shut up in a dungeon for life; the town was given up to plunder; the heretics were burned; their shrieks were mocked by their persecutors. The barbarities at Lavaur surpassed all others even in this fearful war. A general massacre was permitted; men, women, and children were cut to pieces, till there remained nothing to kill, except some of the garrison, and others reserved for a more cruel fate. Four hundred were burned in one great pile, which made a wonderful blaze, and caused universal rejoicing in the camp.¹²

Giralda, the lady of Lavaur, who was pregnant, was thrown into a well, and huge stones rolled down upon her. Her merciless enemies accused her of the most revolting crimes; but the old Troubadour praises her virtues, and says that "no poor man ever left her without being fed."

But we doubt not that our readers, like ourselves, are wearied with this tale of horrors; and we willingly bring our remarks to a close. The bloody policy of Innocent III. was, in a great measure, successful; heresy, in his meaning of the term, was suppressed; the Bible was banished from the houses of the peasantry in Languedoc and Provence. In a council held at Toulouse, in the year 1229, one of the canons was, that the laity were not allowed to have either the Old or New Testament in the vulgar tongue, except a psalter or the like, and all translations of the Scriptures were strictly forbidden.¹³

The sunny provinces of the south of France were once more given up to the uncontrolled dominion of priests and monks, of which we see the results in our own day, in the avidity with which the lying fables of our Lady of Salette are received and propagated among them. The Church of Rome gained a triumph; and doubtless Innocent III. occupies a conspicuous place in the Papal annals as an extirpator of heretics, and a restorer of the unity of the Church. But at what a price was this victory purchased! Hundreds of thousands of human beings butchered with every conceivable circumstance of atrocity. Helpless women, children, old and young, all alike involved in the common massacre. The blood runs cold in merely reading this tale of horror; what then must have been the reality? Whenever, therefore, Romanists boast of the unity of their Church—whenever they appeal to the prevalence of Romish doctrines, as a proof of the truth of their religious system, let our readers think of the bloody history of the poor Albigenes.

¹ Cæsarius Heisterbac, lib. v. cap. 21, relates, that Arnold, when asked by the Crusaders, "what shall we do, for we cannot distinguish between Catholics and heretics," replied, "Cedite eos; novit enim Dominus, qui sunt ejus."

² Nostri non parcemus ordini, sexui, vel etati, fere viginti millia hominum in ore gladii peremerunt: factaque hostium strage permaxima, spoliata est tota civitas ac successa, ultione Divina in eam mirabiliter serviente. Inter Epist. Innoc. III. lib. xi. 101.

³ Vaissette iii. p. 191, and Milman ut supra, p. 116.

⁴ "They were thus sent to burn in the eternal fire of hell," says the chronicler. (Les envoyant ainsi bruler d'un feu éternel.) Milman, ut supra, p. 222.

⁵ Prohibemus etiam, ne libros veteris Testamenti aut novi permittantur, laici habere nisi forte Psalterium aut Breviarium pro divinis officiis; sed ne premissos libros habeant in vulgari translatione articulis inhiibemus. Concil. Tolosan. Ann. 1229, cap. 14. This is the first instance which we meet with in the history of the Popedom of a direct prohibition of the books of Scripture to the laity. What an honour was this canon to the cause of the Albigenes! what a confession of guilt on the side of the Romanists!

¹ Milman ut supra, p. 193.

² Inter omnes sectas que adhuc sunt vel fuerunt, non est perniciosior Ecclesie quam Leonistiarum; et hoc tribus de causis. Prima est, quia est diuturnior. Aliqui enim dicunt, quod duraverit a tempore Silvestri; alii, a tempore apostolorum. Secunda, quia est generalior. Fere enim nulla est terra, in qua hæc secta non sit. Tertia, quia cum omnes alie secte immaniter blasphemiarum in Deum audientibus horrorem inducant, hæc Leonistiarum magnam habet aspectum pietatis; eo quod coram hominibus juste vivant, et bene omnia de Deo credant, et omnes articulos qui in symbolo continentur; solammodo Ecclesiam Romanam blasphemant et clerum; cui multitudine laicorum facilis est ad credendum. Reiner. contra Hæer., cap. iv. p. 54, Ingolst. 1613.

³ Reiner. ut supra, cap. 3.

⁴ Pilichdorf, contra Valdenses, cap. 20, Bibl. Patr., vol. xiii.

⁵ Ib., cap. 21.

⁶ Pagl. Vit., Alexander III. sect. xiii.

⁷ Cf. Epist., Innoc. III., apud Baluz. i. 94.

⁸ Postquam per prædictam fratrem Rainerum fuerint excommunicati sententiam innodati, eorum bona confiscant, et de terra sua proscribunt. Ib.

⁹ Milman, ut supra, vol. IV. p. 195.

¹⁰ Attende per Moysen et Petrum, patres videlicet utriusque Testamenti... Et principes apostolorum, "Ecce gladii duo hæc." Id est simul, dicenti Domino, "Sufficit," legitur respondisse, et materialiter et spiritualiter gladiis sibi invicem assistentibus; alter per alterum adjuvetur! Innoc. Epist. xl. 16. And yet the world heard with awe this sanguinary and impious nonsense!

¹¹ Vide Milman ut supra, p. 208.